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ABSTRACT

The report presents results of two seminars, held in Miami (Florida) and Cambridge (England), in which representatives of two groups, The European Association for International Education and the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs: Association of International Educators, met for intensive discussion of the methods for and design of research on foreign educational systems. This inquiry emerged from the need to improve credential evaluation for admission, placement, and transfer of students across systems. The first seminar focused on content needed in a monograph describing a country's educational system, and resulted in a generic model outline or table of contents, which was tested and refined using the examples of Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. The second seminar group tested the model outline further against Ghana and South Africa, and continued to discuss and develop a generic model for planning and executing a research project, from problem identification to production of the monograph. The model outline and recommended research strategies are presented here, with notes on adaptations for projects in the five countries noted. Appended materials include a worksheet for gathering information, background papers on research methods, designs, and strategies, participant reports and observations, and a list of seminar participants. (MSE)

PIER World Education Series

ED 399 868

Methods and skills for research on foreign educational systems

A Report on the
NAFSA/EAIE 1994 Seminars

June 3-5: University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida
November 22-23: Cambridge, England

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NAFSA:
Association of
International
Educators

PIER World Education Series

Methods and skills for research on foreign educational systems

A Report on the
NAFSA/EAIE 1994 Seminars

June 3-5: University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida
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Caroline Aldrich-Langen, Editor

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The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, founded in 1910, is a nonprofit, voluntary professional education association of degree-granting postsecondary institutions, government agencies, private educational organizations, and education-oriented businesses. Its goal is to promote higher education and further the professional development of members working in admissions, enrollment management, financial aid, institutional research, records and registration, scheduling, academic standards, and student progress.

NAFSA: Association of International Educators is a nonprofit membership association that provides training information and other educational services to professionals in the field of international educational exchange. Its 6,500 members, from the United States and more than 50 other countries makes it the largest professional membership association concerned with the advancement of international education exchange in the world.

Copies of this working paper are available at a cost of $10 for AACRAO and NAFSA members, $15 for non-members. Information concerning all publications of the World Education Series may be obtained by contacting PIER Programs (202.462-4811). Ordering information and a list of currently available PIER publications may be found on the final pages of this report.

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Acknowledgments

This report describes the proceedings of two seminars, the first of which was held at the University of Miami, on June 3-4, 1994. It was funded by NAFSA Field Service via a grant from the United States Information Agency. The second follow-up seminar was held in Cambridge, England, on November 22-23, 1994, which built upon the work accomplished by the participants in Miami.

This publication is the result of teamwork by a group of professionals from the European Association of International Education (EAIE) and NAFSA: Association of International Educators, all dedicated to improving the quality of research and publications on foreign educational systems. We hope that this effort is only the beginning of many years of cooperation between the two associations and that our project will lead to solid research and useful publications that will enhance the admission and placement of students in academic institutions in Europe and the United States.

We are very grateful to the excellent NAFSA Field Service staff who provided invaluable support throughout the project, namely Bill Carroll, who organized the events in Miami, and Elizabeth Bell. We also appreciate the efforts of EAIE staff in selecting and preparing European participants in the seminars. Both NAFSA and EAIE provided travel funds for our editor to observe directly the proceedings in Miami and Cambridge, therefore benefitting this report.

We are indebted to Dr. Eduardo A. Gamarra of Florida International University who described for Miami participants the forces that shape education in Latin America. His thought-provoking comments provided insights and stimulated enthusiasm as we launched our work on this joint project. Special thanks also to Dr. S.T. Smith of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Committee (UCLES) for generous monetary and in kind support of the seminar in Cambridge, and to Kaja Schiotz who attended to the myriad of administrative details associated with the meeting in Cambridge.

Finally, we owe a debt of gratitude to our editor, Caroline Aldrich-Langen of California State University, Chico. She and Cheryl Butterworth, Administrative Secretary at Chico, converted a collection of papers and outlines into this fine document.

Mariam Assefa
Kees Kouwenaar
May, 1995

About the seminars and this report...

Background

A new situation, conducive to cooperation between European and U.S. higher education professionals, is at hand. European interest in credential evaluation--admission, placement, and credit transfer--is rapidly increasing, and the special resources extend not only to the European countries, but also to parts of the world with which Europe has historically had special relations. This interest is now organized professionally in the European Association for International Education (EAIE), established in 1989, a sister organization to NAFSA: Association of International Educators. As a developing organization, EAIE has approached NAFSA for collaboration in the difficult and contentious area of foreign credential evaluation and credit transfer between Europe and the United States, and also with regard to educational systems research in general.

In late 1991, Hans van Dijk, then Executive Director of EAIE, wrote to NAFSA and AACRAO with the suggestion that the organizations cooperate in foreign credential evaluation, research, and publication. Hans van Dijk's letter states: "The time has come, seen from the European side, when there is a need to broaden the professional base and link the European and American sides in the evaluation process. The EAIE proposes to AACRAO and NAFSA to engage in an intercollegiate dialogue between representatives of the three organizations about how to involve the European side in the process of credential evaluation and placement recommendations with regard to European and U.S. university systems, especially through the PIER review system." In response to van Dijk's initiative, a forum was created by which like-minded peers might discuss the problems and search for solutions. A working group was subsequently established to draft a proposal for European-USA collaboration, including suggestions for joint activities and projects. This group's report was issued in February 1993.

One of the report's suggestions for cooperation was in the area of research and publications. The report stated: "EAIE participation enriches the PIER process and would also allow for a thorough discussion of equivalency and placement recommendation issues in a friendly and collegial atmosphere. Through EAIE, European NARIC activities and publications would also become accessible to Americans. EAIE, with help from NAFSA, would produce publications and conduct workshops on U.S. higher education."

The Miami and Cambridge Agendas

It is against this backdrop that the Miami and Cambridge seminars were conceived. In Miami, USA (June 3-5) and Cambridge, UK (November 22-23), two consecutive seminars were held, bringing together professionals from both associations (EAIE and NAFSA) for intensive discussion on the methods for and design of research on foreign educational systems. Latin American and African countries were selected to explore the research topics by using a case study approach. (For a list of participants, see Appendix D.)

The overall aim of the NAFSA-EAIE seminars was to develop jointly effective instruments for the design and implementation of research projects on [aspects of] systems of education, focusing in particular on the micro level: individual programs, qualifications, and the eventual analysis of credentials. The theoretical framework of such research projects defines their goals and identifies the instruments to achieve them.

One goal of the seminars was that they should result in a report on aspects of an educational system that is both accurate in the opinion of local and outside experts and instructive to readers who need to know and understand the system, particularly with a view to assessing its qualifications in the context of another educational system.

The underlying assumption is that a generic model research strategy and model outline, or table of contents, are valid and effective instruments to improve the quality of such a country report, both in terms of their accuracy and usefulness. A second underlying assumption is that a generic set of criteria may prove to be a valid and effective instrument to improve the quality and accountability of assessments of the comparability of foreign educational qualifications. We hope that a follow-up seminar, planned for Milan in 1995, will result in the development of such a generic set of assessment

criteria, thus completing the overall aim of this EAIE-NAFSA project.

The first seminar (in Miami) focused on the content of a country monograph and resulted in a generic model outline or table of contents, tested against and refined towards the specific research needs for Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. It is an abstraction of the systemic characteristic of any education system, be it the North American system of undergraduate and graduate education, the Continental European system of universities and nonuniversities, or any other system of education.

The second seminar (in Cambridge) further tested the model outline against two African countries: Ghana and South Africa, and continued to discuss and develop a generic model to plan and execute a research project from problem identification to production of the monograph. One important conclusion was that asking local and outside experts to comment on facts as well as on the evaluative parts of the manuscript will enhance the quality and transnational usefulness of the publication.

Prior to each seminar, background papers were prepared and distributed to the participants for their review. In both seminars, the participants divided into individual work groups, each of which focused on one country, with the task of fine-tuning the model outline and research strategy for that country. Readers of this report will see the results of their work in the following pages.

The program for each seminar was interactive. It consisted of presentations by country experts and by experts in the design and implementation of research projects. This publication is a record of the seminar proceedings. It is being published for the international admissions and study abroad communities.

The Usefulness of This Report to You

The model outline and research strategy, accompanied by actual applications to specific country projects, are the focus of this report. It is the expectation of the organizers and participants of these two seminars that their collaborative work will assist U.S. and European groups or individuals planning to publish research on educational systems in other countries. See Appendix C for reactions from leaders of various international education organizations who support this collaboration between U.S. and European professionals. Additionally, the participants and planners expect that the papers presented by featured speakers during each symposium, which are included herein as appendices, will help to identify the skills and resources required to conduct research on educational systems.

An upfront glossary of useful acronyms

AACRAO: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

ACE: In this report, the Admissions Officers and Credential Evaluators Section of EAIE

ADSEC: The Admissions Section of NAFSA

AID: Agency for International Development

CEC: National Council for the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials

EAIE: European Association for International Education

NAFSA: NAFSA: Association of International Educators

NARIC: National Academic Recognition and Information Centers (Europe)

NOOSR: National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (Australia)

PIER: Projects for International Education Research

SECUSSA: [NAFSA] Section on U.S. Students Abroad

USIA: United States Information Agency

WES: PIER's World Education Series

The model outline

Using as a point of departure the PIER project model, the Miami participants drafted the following generic outline, or table of contents, which was further refined by the Cambridge participants. It may be used to guide future authors, editors, and workshop groups as they prepare research on educational systems.

Each project's outline will, of course, be driven by the structure of the country itself. Individual authors and editors must organize the research for the project at hand. Therefore, the Miami and Cambridge participants tested the model outline by using it to plan specific country projects: Brazil, Chile, Ghana, Mexico, and South Africa. Their notes (from Miami) for the Brazil, Chile, and Mexico projects are included here to illustrate the country-specific issues that would need to be covered in research projects on those countries. Full adaptations of the model outline for research projects on Ghana and South Africa were developed prior to the Cambridge meeting for distribution to the participants in November. These complete elaborations are also included here following the model.

Appendix A, the Credential Worksheet, provides a tool which identifies the information required for the analysis of individual credentials. Seminar participants and others recommend that it accompany each credential identified in the system and that it be used during researchers' interviews as they attempt to gather information on each individual credential awarded in a country's educational system.

* * * * * * * * *

The participants in Miami and Cambridge emphasize that, when applying this model outline to research projects, it is important to use concepts and terminology as they are used in the home country.

I Introduction

- A. Map
- B. The country and its people
- C. Overview of the educational system
  1. Philosophy and objectives
  2. Context of the educational system, its history and evolution. Current and future critical issues and recurring themes that impact on each level of the system
  3. Overview of the general structure of the system
     - a. Definition of compulsory education
     - b. The academic calendar
     - c. Language of instruction
     - d. Old vs. new systems
     - e. Length of programs
  4. Balance between the public and private sectors
  5. Educational legislation, administration, and finance

6. Recognition, accreditation, mechanisms for quality control or assessment. The way in which educators oversee quality in their own system

7. Statistical information--demographics, enrollments, graduation and attrition rates at various levels

8. Literacy

II Preschool and Primary Education. See I.C.

III Secondary Education

A. Overview. See I.C.

1. History and evolution

   - Include characteristics of both old and new systems

2. Variations of secondary schooling

3. Qualifications of teachers

4. Philosophy and practice of marking system

B. Lower secondary education

1. Leaving examinations and certificates

2. Grading

3. Continuation rates from lower to upper secondary schooling

C. Upper secondary education

1. Curricular streams--academic or university preparatory, teacher training, technical, vocational, applied health, etc.)

   a. Statistics: percentages of students in each stream

   b. Course descriptions, syllabus material

   c. Program structure: number of days and hours per week; number of subjects studied each week (tabular form)

2. Leaving exams and certificates

3. Grading, grade distribution

4. Enrollment data and trends

5. Continuation rates from secondary to tertiary education

6. Access to further education and employment

7. Alternate routes through upper secondary education

IV Technical and Vocational Education (may or may not be treated separately depending on the country studied). See I.C.

A. Admission

B. Programs offered by particular institutions by field

1. Ratio of theoretical and practical training

2. Length of training

C. Diplomas, certificates, and titles awarded

D. Access to further education and employment

V Higher Education

A. General overview. Also see I.C.

1. History and evolution

2. Governance, organization, administration, and funding

3. Transfer of students between types of institutions, transfer of credit

4. Licensing, accreditation, or recognition

5. Language of instruction

6. General access issues

7. Types of higher education institutions (public, private, religious)

B. General profiles of degrees and diplomas offered throughout the higher education system

1. Admissions requirements and entrance exams (if not already covered under A)

2. Degrees and diplomas awarded

3. Program structure. Be sure to define terms

a. Length of programs

b. Period of study quantified, credits, study load quantification

4. Instruction and exams. The "culture of classroom" (class size, teaching methods, interaction, thesis and research requirements)

5. Grading practices

a. Grading system

b. Statistics--distribution of grades

6. Access to further education and employment

C. General profiles of institutions

1. Founding dates

2. Name changes

3. Enrollment

4. Fulltime vs. part-time faculty

5. Faculty qualifications, research requirements, and upgrade facilities

6. Academic calendar or year

7. Admissions requirements

8. Grading system and practices

D. Profiles of different subject areas (as appropriate): technical/vocational, engineering, agriculture, business administration, teacher training, health and social education, architecture, art, music, drama, theology, military, law

1. Overview: accreditation or recognition, enrollment distributions

2. Admissions requirements

3. Degrees and diplomas offered (including how they relate and differ)

4. Programs offered, structure of programs

a. Length of programs

b. Period of study quantified, credits, study load quantification

5. Grading practices

a. Grading system

b. Statistics--distribution of grades

6. Transfer opportunities, access to further education and employment

E. Nontraditional education

1. Adult education

2. Distance learning

3. Extended education

VI International Education

A. Access for foreigners to regular programs

B. Foreign institutions operating in the country (e.g., U.S.-type schools that exist within the county)

VII Guidelines for Credentials Analysts

A. What are key issues that analysts should be aware of?

B. Where does secondary stop and university start?

C. What kind of official documentation is available at each level:

1. From examination authorities

2. From schools

How should one use documentation based on what is available?

D. What to do with a transcript from outside the system but from an institution within the country (i.e., U.S.-type schools that exist within the country)?

E. Factors to use in determining the quality of students and schools

VIII Appendices

A. If not already covered in V, university profiles or list of higher education institutions: addresses, library holdings, academic calendar, enrollment, number of faculty, admissions requirements, areas of study, degrees offered, accreditation or recognition

B. Useful addresses, phone numbers (ministries, accreditation agencies, overseas advising agencies, etc.)

C. Sample documents

D. Selected abbreviations, acronyms

E. Glossary. Include alphabet and important words if alphabet is other than Roman

F. Useful references and publications

IX Index

Original draft by Jean Nesland Olsen
Prepared for the Miami Seminar
May, 1994

Adaptations to the model outline recommended for future projects on Brazil, Chile, and Mexico

The participants in Miami determined that the model outline would need to be adapted for research projects on Brazil, Chile, and Mexico to include the following country-specific issues:

* * * * * * * * *

Brazil: participant notes

1. Socioeconomic factors influencing access to all levels of education
2. Sources of funding for all levels of education
3. Distribution of public funding at all levels of education
4. Higher education
   - a. Role of higher education in Brazil
   - b. Religious-affiliated higher education in Brazil
   - c. Selection of students: access vs. demand
     - ➢ Preparatory programs, cram schools
   - d. Nontraditional programs permitting access to higher and professional education
5. Examination and licensing procedures before professional practice: engineering, medicine, architecture
6. Graduate education: development, structure, location
7. Recognized private education

Submitted by Timothy Thompson
Coordinator of the Brazil Work Group
Following the Miami Seminar
July, 1994

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Chile: participant notes

1. Under "Introduction"

   a. Importance of last 24 years: politicization of education under Allende, military coup and subsequent Pinochet regime resulting in enormous upheaval of educational system

   b. Particularly in light of a. above, philosophy and objectives should be portrayed in historical context

   c. Education in Chile is compulsory through completion of primary level (as opposed to age 16, for example)

   d. Under Pinochet's regime, increase of private educational institutions at all levels

   e. 1980-1986: decentralization of administration and funding of primary and academic secondary schools

   f. Under Pinochet: increase of students while at the same time government funding declined; effect on education

   g. Accreditation of numerous private institutions which have sprung up since early 1980s

   h. Literacy: differences between urban and rural areas

2. Under "Preschool and Primary Education"

   ➢ Nature of preschool education (not compulsory, rarely available in rural areas)

3. Under "Secondary Education"

   a. The role of INACAP (Instituto Nacional de Capitacion Profesional)

   b. *Prueba de Aptitud Academica*/PAA (reference to chapter on higher education)

4. Under "Higher Education"

   a. In the "Overview," discuss Allende, Pinochet, major changes made in 1981; the distinction between public and private institutions; large increase of private institutions since early 1980s; the *Prueba de Aptitud Academica*/PAA, university admissions exam; the difference in admissions process between government-subsidized and private institutions

   b. In the "Profiles of Institutions," include "derived" institutions, those created from former regional campuses of the two original state universities

   c. In "Instruction and Exams," include the following attributes: little interaction in the classroom, rote learning, last year of *licenciatura* devoted to thesis

Submitted by Jessica Stannard
Coordinator of the Chile Work Group
Following the Miami Seminar
July, 1994

16

Mexico: participant notes

1. In the "Introduction" when discussing recognition and accreditation, note the differences at the secondary and tertiary levels

2. Under "Primary Education," discuss literacy rates

3. Under "Secondary Education":

    a. Types and curricular streams of higher secondary education

    b. Assessment

    c. Attrition rates

4. Under "Higher Education":

    a. Facilities

    b. The breakdown by types of institutions, rather than by fields of study, is more useful for Mexico

5. Under "International Education," discuss foreign institutions operating in Mexico (degrees granted, certificates and diplomas awarded, master's programs available)

Submitted by Jane Marcus
Coordinator of the Mexico Work Group
Following the Miami Seminar
July, 1994

Using the model outline for a research project: Ghana

I Introduction

A. Map

B. Ghana: the country and its people

C. Overview of the educational system

1. Philosophy and objectives

2. Context of the educational system, its history and evolution

3. Current critical issues in education in Ghana: current conditions, developments, and trends in educational policy

4. Overview of the general structure of the system, compulsory education, the academic calendar, language of instruction

5. Balance between the public and private sectors

6. Educational legislation, administration and finance

7. Recognition, accreditation, quality assessment

8. Statistical information - demographics, enrollments, graduation and attrition rates at various levels

9. Literacy: regional variations north vs. south; urban vs. rural

II Primary education

A. Recent changes to primary education

B. Current critical issues

III Secondary education

A. Overview

1. History and evolution

2. Recent changes in secondary education; current critical issues; overview of the system before and after the 1987 reform

3. Variations of secondary schooling: private versus public secondary education

4. Qualifications of teachers

5. Philosophy and practice of grading system

B. Lower secondary education

1. Before the 1987 reforms

a. Leaving examinations and certificates

b. Grading

c. Continuation rates from lower to upper secondary schooling

2 Since the 1987 reforms

a. Leaving examinations and certificates

b. Grading

c. Continuation rates from lower to upper secondary schooling

C. Upper secondary education

1. Before the 1987 reforms

a. Curricular streams: academic or university preparatory, teacher training, technical, vocational, applied health, program structures, academic year and period of study, hours per subject per week

b. Statistics: percentage of students in each stream

c. Leaving exams and certificates

d. Grading, grade distribution

e. Enrollment data and trends

f. Continuation rates from secondary to tertiary level

g. Access to further education and employment

h. Alternative routes through upper secondary education

2. Since the 1987 reforms

a. Curricular streams: academic or university preparatory, teacher training, technical, vocational, applied health program structures, academic year and period of study, hours per subject per week

b. Statistics: percentage of students in each stream

c. Leaving exams and certificates

d. Grading, grade distribution

e. Enrollment data and trends

f. Continuation rates from secondary to tertiary

g. Access to further education and employment

h. Alternative routes through upper secondary education

IV Tertiary Education

A. General overview

1. History and evolution

2. Current critical issues

3. Governance, organization, administration, and funding

4. Types of institutions and transfer of students between them; credit transfer

5. Licensing, accreditation and recognition

6. Language of instruction

7. General access issues

B. General profiles of degrees and diplomas offered throughout the tertiary educational system

1. Admissions requirements and entrance exams

2. Degrees and diplomas awarded

3. Program structure

Period of study quantified, credits, study load quantification

4. Instruction and exams. The "culture of the classroom" (class size, teaching methods, interaction, thesis and research requirements)

5. Grading practices

a. Grading system

b. Statistics, distribution of grades

6. Access to further education and employment

C. General profiles of institutions by type of institution: addresses, library holdings, academic calendar, enrollment, number and qualifications of faculty, admissions requirements, areas of study, degrees offered, accreditation or recognition

D. Profiles of selected professionally-oriented subject areas: teacher training, medicine and allied health subjects, agriculture, engineering, business studies

1. Overview: accreditation or recognition, enrollment distribution

2. Admissions requirements

3. Programs offered, structure of programs

4. Degrees and diplomas offered (including how they relate and differ)

5. Grading practices, grading distributions

6. Transfer opportunities, access to further education and employment

V Guidelines for Credential Analysts

A. What are the key issues credential analysts should be aware of?

B. Where does secondary stop and university start?

C What kind of official or otherwise acceptable documentation is available at each level?

D. What to do with a transcript from outside the system but from an institution within the country?

VI Appendices

A. Useful addresses and phone numbers

B. Sample documents

C. Selected abbreviations and acronyms

D. Glossary

E. Useful references

VIII Index

Submitted by Patricia Hubbell
Prepared for the Cambridge Seminar
November, 1994

Using the model outline for a research project: South Africa

I Introduction

A. Map

B. The country and its people: demands on education

1. Geography and climate

2. The people: ethnic and lingual diversity

C. The educational system: history and evolution

1. Introduction: Critical issues in a transitional period

a. A phase "in between"

b. Redressing imbalances

c. Reconciling contrasts and controversies

2. Philosophy and objectives

3. Overview of the general structure

a. Pre-Democracy practices

b. Post-Apartheid initiatives to reconstruct and develop

* National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the role of a central Qualifications Authority (SAQA)
* Curriculum development
* Education support services
* Teachers, trainers and educators
* National Open Learning Agency (NOLA)
* Levels of education
  - Compulsory basic schooling
  - Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)
  - Further education and training
  - Higher education
* Early childhood development
* Partnerships for human resource development

4. Constitutional, legislative basis

a. The educational system (aims, programs, subsystems)

b. Government as a system

c. Interaction between government and education

* The passing of bills
* The National Executive Authority
* National and provincial powers (norms and standards for curricula, examination, certification; legal persona of institutions; salaries and conditions of service, financing, information)
* National policy: norms and standards, how it is determined, advisory and coordinating structures, statutory interest bodies, certification councils, education and training standards

5. Governance, administration and finance

a. Governance and administration

* Organizing principles
* Degree of centralization
* Community involvement

b. Financing education

* The budgeting process
* Distribution of the budget

6. Recognition and accreditation

7. The output of education

a. Assessment

b. Certification

8. Curriculum

a. Aims and objectives

b. Selection of content

c. Ways of teaching and learning

d. Forms of assessment

e. Decision-making structures and processes

f. Core and differentiation; commonality and diversity

9. Access

a. Formal education

b. Training

c. Adult Basic Education (ABE)

10. Language

11. Literacy

12. Partnerships

II Preschool Education

A. History

B. Provision

C. Resources

D. Governance

E. Curriculum and language policy

F. Training and support services

G. Continuance to primary education

III Primary and Secondary Education

A. Prior to reform

1. Primary education

a. Phases

* Junior primary
* Senior primary

b. Medium of instruction

c. Curriculum

d. Assessment and promotion

e. Teacher training

2. Secondary education

a. Teacher qualifications

b. The grading system: philosophy and practice

c. Phases

* Junior secondary (leaving examinations and certificates, grading, continuance to upper secondary)
* Senior secondary (curricular streams including statistics, leaving examinations and certificates, grading and grade distribution,

enrollment, continuance to tertiary education, access to further and higher education, and employment)

B. Reform initiatives

1. Integration of education and training

2. Compulsory schooling (level 1) leading to the General Certificate of Education

a. General academic schooling

b. Adult Basic Education and Training (sub-levels A, B, C)

3. Further schooling (levels 2, 3, 4) leading to Higher and Further Certificates of Education

a. Senior secondary schools

b. Technical and community colleges

c. Private providers and NGO's (nongovernmental organizations)

d. Industry training

e. Labor market schemes

4. Modular approach and learning units

5. Curriculum

a. Design

b. Development

IV Special Education and Support Services

V Vocational Education

A. Overview

B. Technical colleges

1. Introduction

2. Admission requirements

3. Types of instructional programs and qualifications

4. Composition and duration

5. Examination and certification

6. Exemption, recognition

C. Industry Training Board

VI Higher (nonuniversity) Education

A. *Technikon* education

1. Overview

a. History and evolution

b. Aims and objectives

2. Governance, administration and funding

3. Accreditation, examination and certification

4. Instructional programs

a. Admission requirements and entrance examinations

b. Hierarchical levels, designation and types

c. Introduction, revision, offering and phasing out

d. Program structure (period of study quantified, credits and modules, study load quantified)

e. Classroom "culture" (class size, language of instruction, teaching methods, interaction, research requirements)

f. Grading practices (grading system, distribution of grades)

g. Access to further education, professional registration and employment

h. Certificates and diplomas awarded

i. Articulation

5. General profiles of institutions

a. Faculty qualifications and upgrade facilities

b. Academic calendar or year

6. Profiles of subject areas (technical, vocational, engineering, agriculture, commercial and business administration, teacher training, health and social sciences, architecture, art, music, drama, theology, military, law)

a. Enrollment distributions

b. Admission requirements

c. Programs offered and structures

d. Grading

e. Transfer opportunities

7. Non-conventional education

a. Distance learning

b. Extracurricular education

B. Other higher nonuniversity education

1. Nursing training

2. Professional institutes

VII Higher (university) Education

A. Overview

1. History and evolution

2. Aims

3. Governance, organization, administration and funding

4 Different types of institutions: student and credit transfer

5. Accreditation

6. Language of instruction

7. General access

B. Profiles of courses offered

1. Admission requirements and entrance examinations

2. Qualification structure

a. Aims

b. Diplomas and degrees awarded

3. Program structure (period of study quantified, credits and modules, study load quantified)

4. Guidelines for curricula (point of departure, emphasis, subject matter, structure, balance)

a. Degrees (undergraduate and postgraduate)

b. Diplomas (initial, postgraduate and advanced)

5. Classroom "culture" (class size, teaching methods, interaction, research requirements)

6. Grading practices (grading system, distribution of grades)

7. Access to further education, professional registration and employment

C. General profiles of institutions

1. Faculty qualifications and upgrade facilities

2. Academic calendar or year

D. Profiles of subject areas (technical and vocational, engineering, agriculture, commercial and business administration, teacher training, health and social sciences, architecture, art, music, drama, theology, military, law)

1. Enrollment distributions

2. Admission requirements

3. Programs offered and structures

4. Grading

5. Transfer opportunities

E. Non-conventional education

1. Distance learning

2. Extracurricular education

VIII Teacher Training

IX Non-formal Education

A. Overview: history and evolution

B. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

C. Partnerships with formal education

D. Accreditation

E. Adult basic and adult education

F. Recognition of prior learning and credit transfer

X Access for Foreigners

XI Guidelines for Credential Analysts

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B. Official documentation

C. Identifying critical resource people

D. Keeping up with proposals becoming policy

E. Keeping up with implementation and its outcome

XII Appendices

A. Diagrams

B. Statistical data

C. Lists of institutions

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E. Sample documents

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G. Glossary

H. Useful references

I. Useful publications

XIII Index

Submitted by H.C. de Villiers
Prepared for the Cambridge Seminar
November, 1994

The model research strategy

The model research strategy presented here was developed by a subgroup of Cambridge participants. When formulating a research strategy it is necessary to consider the project design, which is provided by the model outline. As with the model outline, this model research strategy was tested by using it to plan projects on Ghana and South Africa. The results follow directly after the model.

Appendix A, the Credential Worksheet, provides a tool for identifying information required for the analysis of individual credentials. Seminar participants and others recommend that it accompany each credential identified in the system and that it be used during researchers' interviews as they attempt to gather information on each individual credential awarded in a country's educational system.

* * * * * * * * *

A model project scenario covering the inception, researching, writing and publication of a manuscript on a foreign educational system, should include the following six phases. Note that these phases are not water-tight. Much overlapping occurs.

1. Preliminary Phase
2. Desk Research Phase
3. Field Work: Country Visit Phase
4. Review and Re-writing Phase
5. Publication Phase
6. Evaluation Phase

There was not enough time for either the Ghana nor the South African workgroup to work on phases 5 and 6.

Preliminary Phase

A. Problem identification:
Identify reasons why the publication is needed; which, among other things, can justify the project to the publisher and to potential sources of funding.
Possible reasons: political and/or educational reforms, flow of students to or from a certain country, general lack of current information

B. Market identification:
Identify for whom the publication is intended (i.e., EAIE, NAFSA, AACRAO, NOOSR).
Possibilities: credential evaluators, admissions officers, study abroad advisors, other interested international users.

C. Consult market in order to:

1. Define problem areas, critical issues

2. Obtain suggestions for sources of information (a standardized questionnaire or survey can be developed for both 1. and 2.).

3. Make publication plans known to avoid duplicating efforts.

Note: Identifying the problem and the needs of the target group will determine the scope of the publication, i.e., either a comprehensive volume, one focusing on specific aspects, or an interim volume which will provide the necessary information about a system undergoing a major change.

D. Write up the outline or table of contents using the Miami model.

E. Identify qualifications desired of potential researchers, as well as the desired composition of team. Consider the following:

1. Writing skills

2. Prior research experience and skills (e.g., interview techniques, developing questionnaires and surveys)

3. Language skills

4. Professional experience including knowledge of foreign educational systems in general, and of the educational system of country under study in particular

Note: Seminar participants recommend that not all team members come from one country and that one member be from the country under study.

F. Develop a timeline, including the estimated number of weeks and/or months required for each phase and intended completion date.

G. Analyze cost recovery:
Include an ideal as well as a more realistic scenario and the consequences of both possibilities on the project and final product.

H. Draw up a proposal for the publisher and source of funds including detailed descriptions of each phase of the research project (1 through 6).

Desk Research Phase

Gathering of information is an ongoing process. Research strategies must be constantly redefined based on new information.

A. Distribute the workload and responsibilities among research team members.

B. Conduct a literature study of printed and electronic material available on the country and obtain as much information as possible. Suggested sources of information are listed here, but this list is by no means exhaustive:

1. International education publications

2. Bibliographical references

3. News reports and newspaper clippings

4. Educational policy documents

5. Institutional catalogues

6. Lists of institutions

7. Sample curricula, sample documents (diplomas, transcripts)

8. Electronic files

C. Consult with experts, colleagues, and exchange students both within and outside of the country being studied for suggestions pertaining to additional reference material and contacts. Obtain additional published information.

D. Prepare and distribute a survey instrument to support later in-country interviews, providing information on, for example, specific credentials, institutional profiles, admissions information.

E. Establish in-country contacts:

1. Ministry of Education

2. Regional departments of education

3. Examining bodies

4. Staff and faculty of educational institutions

5. Research institutions

6. Students (in-country or exchange students)

F. Write a first draft of the manuscript. This will help you determine where gaps exist in the information available.

III Field Work: Country Visit Phase

The purpose of the country visit is to verify information already obtained and to gain additional information through interviews, visits, observations and discussions.

A. Planning Phase (takes place prior to trip):

1. Based on desk research, identify areas where further information or clarification is needed

2. Contact individuals and institutions that should be interviewed and/or visited. Make appointments.

a. Request assistance from diplomatic and educational authorities in the country when establishing contacts.

b. Develop a means by which reliability of information sources can be established

3. Based on the above, draw up itinerary, establish a budget, take care of any diplomatic concerns (visas, clearance)

B. Conduct interviews, during which the following should be taken into consideration:

1. The importance of effective interview techniques

2. Particularly sensitive issues

3. Being as objective as possible

3. The importance of obtaining a balanced picture, that is, getting information from all sides

C. Visit a wide range of institutions, geographically as diverse as possible. Visit government offices

D. Take copious notes during the entire trip, identifying the source of your information (i.e., published information, interviews, personal observations)

E. Use credential worksheets for each credential you gather before and during the visit

F. Use institutional worksheets for each educational institution you learn about

G. Arrange routine, even daily, review sessions among team members

Review and Re-writing Phase

A. Based on in-country research, write the second (for the most part, final) draft

B. Submit the manuscript for review by:

1. In-country contacts and experts

2. Colleagues

3. Publisher

4. Symposium (as for PIER volume on Nordic countries)

Submitted by Jessica Stannard
Following the Cambridge Seminar
February, 1995

Using the model research strategy for a project: Ghana

There is no distinct research strategy and planning phase: research strategy is a continuous process, by which the research proposal is revised and refined at the end of each phase.

I Problem identification:

This phase precedes and leads to writing the research proposal.

A. Through contacts and readings, the prospective author identifies the need for information on the Ghanaian educational system: shifts in mobility patterns, desire to establish bilateral links, major changes in the system signaled in the press, and other factors.

B. Contact organizations worldwide, e.g., EAIE, NAFSA, PIER, NOOSR to inform colleagues of the proposed initiative, investigate the potential for cost-sharing ventures, seek suggestions on useful contacts, and generally ensure that the project team can tap available resources.

C. Consult potential users and field-specific experts (local and beyond) in order to designate problem areas, and establish the form in which the required information would be most useful.

D. Draft the proposed country outline or table of contents.

E. At the end of this phase, the prospective author will be in a position to draft the research proposal, or rather two proposals: one proposal setting forth the "ideal" research project and its cost, and one setting out the "core" research project, that is, the minimum that would meet the perceived information need, given limited funding.

Defining the "core" research project is a matter of prioritization. It must be based on a yet-to-be-established research hierarchy or protocol, since some sections presuppose prior information (for example, you cannot cover higher education without covering secondary education). The easiest and most obvious way to trim down the ideal research project is to leave some subject areas out.

II Preliminary desk research

During this phase research is conducted from the office. It could be a one-person job, but would ideally be undertaken by a team of three.

A. Conduct a literature survey to cover anything published on Ghanaian education since 1987. Gain further insight into the issues through studying these secondary sources.

B. Through local contacts whether long-standing, such as the British Council (BC) office in Ghana, or recently established as a result of phase I, obtain additional published information, e.g., educational policy documents, lists of institutions, catalogues, curricula, sample documents.

C. Contact those individuals in the academic community and beyond who have had recent experience in and a connection with Ghanaian education. Among likely candidates are:

1. Coordinators of established links between with Ghanaian higher educational institutions (e.g., some links are managed by BC colleagues)

2. Teachers and language assistants who may have been on exchange visits

3. Ghanaian students currently in the researchers' countries

4. Other related international bodies

5. U.S. student advisers in Ghana

D. Obtain copies of reports written by any of the above, and arrange interviews whenever appropriate.

E. Write a first draft version of the report and identify areas where further information or clarification is needed or where verification of the official information provided seems particularly necessary.

F. With the assistance of a local representative (e.g., BC office, U.S. student adviser), identify suitable contact points and resource persons in Ghana and make an assessment of the likely reliability of these potential interviewees.

III The field work: in-country research

This is the crucial verification phase, and a minimum of two weeks in Ghana is imperative to the project. Adequate preparation will be essential to maximize what can be achieved in-country. (See II.)

A. Define the qualifications of the author and establish areas where additional expertise is needed.

1. Identify admissions officers and academics with the required credential evaluation or subject expertise who would be prepared to accompany the author on a fact-finding mission to Ghana. The size of the visiting team will depend on whether the "ideal" or the "core" proposal is to be implemented.

2. To keep costs down, no honoraria will be offered, though travel and subsistence costs will be covered.

B. Brief the selected candidate(s).

C. Organize the program of the visit in collaboration with local representatives. Ensure that they understand the purpose of the publication and the aims of the visit.

D. Organize the in-country research program so that it provides opportunities for discussions with both educational officials and academics:

1. Include visits to a broad range of institutions in different parts of the country.

2. Seek to maximize occasions for conversation with teaching staff, students, and Ghanaians educated abroad (or foreigners currently in Ghana) who, therefore, have experience of another educational system.

E. Ensure the uniformity of the information gathered during the visit through the use of the credential worksheet and a standardized structure for interviews.

F. Reserve time for review sessions, where the academic expert and the author can compare notes. Plan a final debriefing section of the visiting team with the local staff involved.

G. Conduct the visit.

IV Review and Re-writing

A. Author completes the second (and final) draft manuscript.

B. The manuscript is forwarded to Ghana for comments by the contacts visited and interviewed. If funding allows, organize a symposium for additional feedback.

Submitted by Patricia Hubbell
Following the Cambridge Seminar
January, 1995

Using the model research strategy for a project: South Africa

I **Problem Identification: Why is a publication needed?**

A. Educational reform in South Africa

1. Information on the old system

a. Complex, fragmented

b. "Illegitimate": representative of the old order

2. Information on the new system

a Tension between reform initiatives and reality

b. Still to be implemented

3. Current situation: information and documentation-in-the-making

a. Gradual phasing-in of initiatives

b. State of transfer

B. International need

➢ Shared frame of reference; common indicators

C. Goal: To enhance international understanding of all aspects of South African education (with special reference to educational renewal/reconstruction), specifically for purposes of credential evaluation and student exchange, against a shared frame of reference.

D. Target Group:

1. Workshop participants

2. Admissions officers

3. Credential evaluators

4. Comparative educators

E. Model: Use the Miami outline, the table of contents

II **Desk Research Strategies**

A. Identify trends and issues in South African education

1. Literature studies:

a. International publications (including encyclopedia and journals, e.g., *The International Encyclopedia of Education, Perspectives in Education*)

b. Electronic data (e.g., SABINET [South African Bibliographical Information Network], Human Sciences Research Council [HSRC] reports on ERIC)

c. Newspaper clippings (INCH [Institute for Contemporary History])

d. News reports

e. Research reports (e.g. from HSRC)

f. Faculty publications

g. Seminar and conference proceedings

h. Policy documents, draft proposals, and comments

i. Statistical data (from HSRC, Research Institute for Education Planning)

2. Establishment of contacts:

a. International: other credential evaluators, authors of publications, students, guest speakers, and other experts

b. In South Africa: ministry of education, provincial departments of education, certification councils, members of:

- educational institutions
- research institutions
- working groups and committees
- education forums
- other interest groups (e.g., SACHES - South African Comparative and History of Education Society)

3. Questionnaires

B. Develop an outline (adapt the Miami table of contents)

C. Write first draft document

III Field Research: Country visit

Purpose: to verify information in draft document and gather additional material.

A. Planning:

1. Consider the academic year, holidays

2. Make and confirm appointments

3. List educational and other institutions, contact persons and venues

4. Plan itinerary

5. Stay and travel (means and cost)

B. Personal contacts:

1. Structured interviews

a. Notebook, tape recorder

b. State purpose

c. Clarify any misunderstanding (verification)

2. Informal discussions to determine hidden philosophical issues, perceptions

3. Observation

4. Constant review of draft and notes

C. Collection of relevant documentation (sample policy documents, government gazettes, curricula,university calendars, examination documentation, timetables, other documentation)

IV Review and Re-write of Draft Based on Country Visit

Submitted by H.C. de Villiers
Prepared for the Cambridge Seminar
December, 1994

Appendix A
Credential Worksheet

Placement recommendations or policies must be supported by an adequate textual description of the credential. The credential worksheet is designed to assist with the gathering of information to support each placement recommendation or policy.

1. Exact title of the credential in native language: _____
   _____
   a. Translation or transliteration: _____
      _____
   b. Awarding body for the credential: _____
      _____
2. Entrance requirements: _____
   _____
3. Length of fulltime study in years or months: _____
   _____
4. Nature of the program:
   a. Primary emphasis of program (e.g., teacher training, applied health, vocational): _____
      _____
   b. Academic vs. vocational: _____
      _____
   c. Practical training component (amount: % of time): _____
      _____
   d. Other requirements (e.g., examinations, projects, thesis, experience): _____
      _____
5. Access provided by this credential in country under study: _____
   _____
6. Grading scale (if unique to this credential): _____
   _____
7. Additional comments:

Source: National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials, 1991.

Appendix B
The Design and Implementation of Research Projects

B.1: Research Methodology
The paper presented by Kees Kouwenaar

Research in the Social Sciences

In social science methodology one can distinguish various stages in a research project. Below is an overview of the main stages, research strategies and techniques for data gathering. It is not comprehensive, but still useful for our own research design. Little attention is given to (quantitative) data analysis because that seems of less relevance to our purpose.

The four stages of research in social science:

1. Research design
   - problem definition
   - construction of theory or model
   - research strategy
     - experiment
     - questionnaire
     - field research
     - desk research
     - individual testing
     - simulation
2. Data gathering
   - observation techniques
   - drafting of questionnaires
   - interview techniques
   - drawing of samples
3. Data analysis
4. Research report

Research in Comparative Education

I want to make two main points with regard to the value of comparative education as an academic discipline in the context of this seminar.

One is that there has been an ongoing argument–as in the social sciences as a whole–between the "quantitative approach" and the "qualitative approach." Can you base yourself only on what has been proven or also on what you have come to understand and believe to be true? My sources stipulate that there is a place for both approaches and that there is no room for either form of fundamentalism.

The second is that comparative education as a form of social science does not seem to be interested in our kind of problem. They want to compare across national borders **in order to help solve national problems.** They are not interested in the value of an educational qualification in a setting that is foreign to that qualification.

I am no specialist, but I suspect that we may find some general guidelines in social science methodology, and that we will find little practical support in comparative education.

Research for International Education

The research that we are discussing in this seminar is "applied": it seeks to redress the problem that we lack information and understanding on the evaluation of a foreign educational credential within our own educational setting.

This problem is two-fold:

- to identify differences and similarities between the foreign credential and a credential from our own system
- to identify an acceptable level of difference in view of the administrative decision on recognition, admission and so on.

Field research in our context would mean the actual, factual and objective proof of learning outcomes in the classrooms of the country that we describe. We don't do field research.

We do desk research and literature studies; if we do a workshop on site–which we definitely should–we do so to procure more written material and to get a sniff of the *couleur locale*. We will not reach beyond the level of "educated guesses," but they are a lot better than uneducated guesses. And we are here to make these guesses as educated as we possibly can.

The following research strategy is often applied by NUFFIC for studies in international education:

Based on the identification of both the facts and the opinions that we are looking for, we try to make a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches:

a) a systematic collection of the objective data (through desk research and/or questionnaires);

b) a methodical analysis of the collected data;

c) in-depth interviews of experts (or a seminar with experts) on the collected data and their analysis.

Probably, the use of interviews to tap the experience of "experts" as an additional source of data does not meet the formal requirements of the social sciences when used to underpin generalized statements. The method is methodologically acceptable when used to check whether preliminary findings have been discolored by misconceptions of implicit contextual factors.

Information Needs

I will not treat the subject of what specific information is needed for our purpose. The model outline (originally drafted by Jean Olsen) will do that excellently. I just want to point out the need for information on two intertwined aspects, where it is most difficult to get and to interpret. And yet it is, in my view, essential to our purpose.

One is the underlying educational philosophy, or concept if you will. Is the education process seen as a social selection process, as an economic investment, as a political instrument, as a cultural heritage? Does it aim at knowledge transfer, at (analytic and synthetic) skills or at the development of a socially desirable individual attitude?

Information on educational philosophy or concepts will often be difficult to procure and will always be difficult to interpret as token principles or real objectives. But when you also look for them in the actual classroom situation (and that is the second of my two aspects), it will help you to add valuable qualitative information to the literature and interviews with experts.

Reliability of the Information

We cannot shut our eyes to local bias. Legal regulations are not always followed to the letter in real school life. Local experts have their own hidden agendas when you speak with them, especially, but not exclusively, with regard to the evaluation of their education in other countries.

But neither should we disregard our own bias. To cite the *1985 AACRAO Guide for International Admissions and Evaluations Officers,* "Remember the golden rule: one year of education in a foreign country equals one year of education in the United States; never more, sometimes less." And we Europeans generally are just as bad!

We can improve reliability by diversification:

Diversification of sources and of the background of the experts that we interview. It is important to interview both government representatives, institutional managers and teachers and students themselves; not only to have more complete information, but also to check information and make it more reliable.

Diversification of the researchers and writers of the reports. One writer or a team of writers from similar universities in one country may show more bias than a mixed team of persons from different backgrounds. This is one of the important reasons for transatlantic cooperation. Having both Americans and Europeans on a research team will broaden the outlook and enhance awareness of hitherto implicit assumptions.

Most importantly, we can improve the reliability of our facts by having them checked by resource persons in the country concerned. We do not have to accept local criticism of our value judgments. But even there, our report will generally improve if we ask the local resource persons for comments even on our assessments and judgments. It will make us more critical of our own opinions and force us to have better arguments.

Interpretation of information

With regard to this aspect, I will just give some unconnected observations for discussion and consideration.

a) Bring your assessment and your information needs more in line with accepted methodology in Comparative Education.

b) Always keep structural and conceptual differences in mind: they have different values over there! Respect that!

c) Don't hide yourself behind quantitative criteria and other "objective" benchmarks. They are useful pointers and thumb rules, not decisive criteria.

d) Take a functional approach to educational achievements, based on a functional comparison of access to what societal activities is gained with these foreign achievements.

Politics

This seminar brings together American and European specialists in order to construct a blueprint for research into systems, institutions and programs of education, mainly in view of the needs of credential evaluators, admissions officers and recognition specialists. A few remarks from the European perspective:

Europeans have never seen a concerted effort for systemic data collection in this direction. We know of German, British, and other efforts and publications at national level, but we have always looked with envy at the PIER and WES activities.

Europeans have been less than comfortable with the way in which their own education systems were treated by the Americans, although their own attitude was hardly any better. International student exchange and transnational educational cooperation have grown explosively since the late 1980s, not only within Europe but also across the Atlantic. International education is no longer a fringe activity in the United States or in Europe. Major political shifts in Europe and in the world at large have affected international education and will continue to do so. These changes call for new and better ways to deal with the differences in our education systems.

The recent work of the UNESCO working group on Europe-USA recognition problems represents major steps forward. Already this is having positive effects on the decisions on recognition issues both in the United States and in European countries. It is the way to move forward.

A Summary of Research Methods for the Admissions Community

1. Bring your assessment and your information needs more in line with accepted methodology in Comparative Education.

2. Always keep structural and conceptual differences in mind: they have different values over there!

3. Don't hide behind quantitative criteria and other "objective" benchmarks. They are useful pointers and thumb rules, not decisive criteria.

4. Take a functional approach to educational achievements, based on a functional comparison of access to what societal activities is gained with these foreign achievements.

5. Don't take information at face value. Information bearers or you yourself may mistake the meaning(s) in the different national context.

6. Diversify your sources to increase reliability; diversity means not just more than one, it means <u>different</u> sources.

7. Qualitative data are not objective; try to make them intersubjective.

8. You don't have to accept correction of your assessment by the country concerned. But you must invite comments and if there is serious criticism, add that as a footnote to your report.

9. When written information is plentiful, desk research will do most of the job. But remember two things:

   a) Field research will add color. This will profit not just the researchers, especially if they establish an e-mail helpdesk.

   b) Without adequate written information and in rapidly changing situations, field

research may be unavoidable. Plan carefully.

10. Assessment of foreign qualifications should not aim at assessment of achievements, but at the assessment of fitness for further achievements in the host environment.

11. Assessment can be ruled by political/legal criteria: "If our kids cannot be admitted without 12 years of schooling, then their kids cannot either." Assessment can also be ruled by educational criteria: "If we can trust the foreign to succeed, then we must accept his credentials for admission."

12. Comparative educationalists are not interested in scholastic achievements as such; they are only interested in these things in relation to the effects that these achievements have on society; on the individual's ability to cope in society; and on societal changes in response to education. However, credential evaluators are relatively uninterested in the possible effects of scholastic achievements within the home country. They need to assess the scholastic achievements in view of predictability of ability to cope within the (societal or further educational) setting of the host country.

13. Remember the Golden Rule: One year of education in a foreign country equals one year of education in your own country; **never more, sometimes less.** Remember the rule, and start questioning its wisdom and fairness!

Kees Kouwenaar
May, 1994

B.2: Research strategies: Excerpts from the 1994 PIER Guide: The paper presented by Ann Fletcher

Each author, whether working alone or as part of a team, is responsible for conducting research and preparing a manuscript that presents accurate, consistent, and thorough information relevant to the needs of the targeted audience. An important aspect of a World Education Series/WES project is a research strategy that will result in sufficient and accurate information on the educational system under review. In conducting research, the author should consider the following:

1. Conduct a survey, either formal or informal, early in the project to determine particular issues involved in evaluating credentials from the country under study, at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and in particular areas of study. Electronic mail is an excellent way to survey colleagues and solicit information and transcripts. The content of the manuscript must address the concerns and needs of admissions officers and others who evaluate foreign academic credentials.
2. Conduct a survey of the literature: international education publications, bibliographical references, library sources, in-country publications, electronic files.
3. Maintain accurate bibliographic references. Academic standards must be used in the attribution of sources.
4. Develop a thorough outline covering all major aspects of the educational system:
   - organization and administration of education
   - differences between tracks and streams
   - articulation among programs
   - assessment of students, examination procedures
   - quality indicators (institutions, individual students, programs)
5. Use the Credential Worksheet (see Appendix A) to collect information required to evaluate foreign academic credentials and to support placement recommendations. For each academic credential, the following information is required:
   - admissions requirements for the program
   - level of program, as defined within the educational system
   - length of program
   - content of program
   - nature and purpose of the program
   - access to further study or employment; articulation between programs
6. Establish contacts with government and other officials: through the NAFSA staff, contact appropriate officials in the U.S. government (particularly USIA and, in some countries, AID), the U.S.embassy, in-country education officials, Fulbright and other OSEAS officers. Familiarize them with the purpose of the publication and its sponsorship.
7. Develop in-country contacts who can provide advice on publications, interviews, other sources of information. These contacts may also be useful in responding to questions, coordinating interviews, and reviewing the manuscript.
8. Develop a methodology for the collection of data on higher education institutions. Determine the content and format of information to be included in institutional profiles. Obtain catalogs from higher education institutions. If written institutional descriptions are not readily available, develop a survey to collect information; allow considerable time for response.
9. Collect publications from government offices, sample secondary curricula, and other documentation related to secondary leaving examinations. Collect sample academic documents from all types of institutions.

The Country Visit

The purpose of the country visit is to verify information already received, to fulfill specific research objectives, and to gain insight into the educational system through extensive conversations with educational officials in the country under study.

The first draft of the manuscript, completed before the country visit, will help the author develop a research agenda for the trip. The first draft must be approved by the monitor and project manager before final travel plans are made.

The country visit is an intense experience of limited length. Appointments should be confirmed in advance. The following points are essential for a successful trip:

1. Travel during the academic year when educational institutions are in session and not closed for major holidays.
2. Plan a detailed itinerary prior to departure with the assistance of diplomatic and educational authorities in the country.
3. Prior to departure, interview students, faculty and others from the country who may have useful contacts. Returned alumni may also be valuable resource persons for the research trip.
4. Visit a wide range of institutions: academic and vocational upper secondary schools, universities, other types of tertiary institutions (teacher training, allied health, arts, technical institutions), public and private institutions, other types of institutions that are unique to the country or problematic for admissions officers.
5. Take time to make diplomatic visits.
6. Prepare a list of questions to ensure that key issues are addressed during interviews. Maintain a journal and notes throughout the trip; review them frequently to ensure clarity and identify ambiguity that should be resolved before the end of the trip.
7. Bring along the credentials you have already gathered, attaching a Credential Worksheet to each, to assist in gathering information during interviews. Take a supply of blank worksheets to use whenever you encounter an unfamiliar credential.
8. When beginning an interview, explain the purpose of your project. Look for opportunities to request assistance for the review of portions of the manuscript. Request sample documents, syllabi, catalogs, and descriptions of degree requirements.
9. Obtain a list of tertiary institutions from official sources; clarify evaluation and recognition procedures.
10. Carefully review charts and documents provided by educational officials and clarify questions. Obtain written permission for use of official documents in the final publication.
11. Send thank you letters to officials who provided assistance and granted interviews during the trip.

Ann Fletcher
May, 1994

B.3: Research strategies in Latin America: Outline of the presentation by Liz Reisberg and Kathleen Sellew

I. Introduction

- A. How to develop a plan
- B. Developing alternate strategies when it doesn't work

II Resources available in the United States

- A. Historical and cultural context of the country or region
- B. PIER (formerly JCOW) and WES publications (available from AACRAO or NAFSA)
- C. Interamerican Development Bank studies
- D. World Bank
- E. Other library resources

III Internet connections

- A. INTER-L
- B. GOPHER resources and strategies
- C. Higher education lists
- D. World Wide Web

IV In-country written resources

- A. University catalogs
- B. Ministry plans and studies
- C. Agency for International Development(AID) studies
- D. *Barron's*-type guides

V In-country people connections

- A. U.S. government offices (Agency for International Development, U.S. Information Services [USIS])
- B. Ministry of education officials
- C. Overseas Educational Advisers/OSEAS offices
- D. Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO)

E. Academics

F. Alumni from your institution

G. Personal connections through the internet

H. How do you know you have the right person?

VI Characteristics of in-country information

A. Discussion of importance of language skills and cultural knowledge

B. Reliability of information

C. Economic constraints

D. Technical constraints

E. Nature of data collection; lack of statistics and lack of distribution

F. Decentralization of information

G. Whom do you trust?

H. Determine interview protocols

I Logistical and time constraints

J When do you call it quits?

Liz Reisberg and Kathleen Sellew
April, 1994

B.4: Research methodology for credential analysis
The paper presented by Margarita Sianou

Methodology for Credential Analysis

A. The Problem

In the absence of a system for the recognition of academic credentials, and in order to facilitate international student exchanges, our profession needs to establish an accepted methodology for the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications.

B. The Environment - Who does evaluations or placement recommendations in the United States?

In the United States, unlike Europe, there is no national or central body responsible for the assessment and recognition of foreign academic credentials. The process is decentralized, as is the U.S. system of education, and perfomed by the following:

1. Admission officers at individual institutions
2. National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials (CEC)
3. Private credential evaluation services
4. Licensing and certification boards
5. Employers

C. Undergraduate Admission Criteria

1. Domestic:

In the United States emphasis is placed on an applicant's ability and potential to succeed rather than the sufficiency of the credential. In determining ability the following information is required:

a. Reputation and status of institution (accreditation) where the applicant was prepared

b. Quality of performance

c. Curricular analysis: appropriateness of preparation

d. External examinations (AP, SAT, ACT)

2. International:

a. Benchmark credential

b. Number of years of schooling

c. Status of institution

d. Quality of performance

e. Curricular analysis: type and intensity of program

f. Leaving examination vs. graduation certificate

g. Gives access to tertiary education in home country

D. Graduate or Postgraduate Admission Criteria

The process of analysis at this level is faculty-driven for both domestic and international students and considers the following:

1. Benchmark credential
2. Length of program
3. Status of institution (accreditation)
4. Quality of performance
5. Program analysis
6. Professionals in the field of admission are primarily the source of information regarding placement recommendation guidelines.

a. CEC placement recommendations and guidelines

b. Information sharing

c. Training

Toward the Establishment of a Methodology

A. The Problem

According to statistical reports (*Open Doors 1992, Report on International Education Exchanges, IIE*), there were approximately 419,585 international students attending U.S. institutions. Historically, the information gathering process has been driven by need. As the students came from all over the world, admission officers were forced to seek information on national systems of education, and in turn assess their credentials, e.g., students from China in the 1980s, and recently from the former Soviet Union.

In the United States, the needs of our profession regarding information are different from those of our European colleagues, simply because where our students come from varies rather drastically.

Professionals in the field, evaluators and admission officers, have been assessing foreign academic credentials and establishing placement recommendation guidelines for a number of years on the basis of need, simply by doing it. What remains to be done is the rationalization of knowledge, although in the United States, we will be employing a rather unorthodox paradigm, from praxis to theory.

B. Definition: The process by which we assess foreign credentials and/or establish equivalencies by employing:

1. Clearly identified and defined criteria based on understanding a system.

2. Establishing the existing relationships among them, at first, within the national framework, and subsequently on a comparative basis.

C. Criteria:

1. Levels and stages (quantitative analysis)

2. Admission requirements (secondary school graduation, university matriculation examinations, etc.)

3. Nature and scope of the program (vocational, academic, university, etc.)

4. Intent: What does the credential give access to in the home country?

5. Quality: Systemic, institutional (e.g., public expenditure on education, access, teacher qualifications and training, libraries, laboratories)

Information Gathering

A. Quantitative Analysis

1. Percentage of the Gross National Product allocated to education, broken down by level and stage.

2. Enrollment percentages and statistical information.

a. Number of students attending primary, secondary, and tertiary education; by level and total.

b. Number of students who complete the entire elementary/secondary cycle of education and are awarded the secondary school diploma.

c. Percentage of high school diploma holders admitted to institutions of higher learning; male/female ratio.

d. Total number of university graduates; rural/urban ratio.

e. Public vs. private enrollment numbers

f. Teacher qualifications and number of Ph.D. holders.

g. Total number of teachers by level.

3. Libraries

B. Qualitative Analysis

1. Marking System:

Existing marking patterns and practices; how teachers grade, i.e. is the entire range used; sociological and philosophical criteria that

have directly and/or indirectly influenced their development.

2. Pre-primary and Primary Education:

   a. While kindergartens are part of the system, what is their function; i.e., pre-schools or day-care centers?

   b. What is the level of actual reading/writing knowledge of children starting school?

3. Secondary Education:

   a. Total number hours of classroom instruction

   b. Classroom size (comparison of urban and rural areas)

   c. Teacher qualifications; what percentage (stated and real) holds university degrees?

   d. Teaching methodology.

   e. Facilities (libraries and laboratories) particularly at the upper-secondary level.

   f. Curriculum development and textbooks (writing, organization and availability).

   g. Upper-secondary curricular analysis in the following subjects: mathematics, physics, chemistry, literature, and foreign language; level of knowledge achieved at the end of the secondary-cycle of education, i.e., mathematics and science.

   h. Definition of the secondary school diploma; for instance, to award a diploma in the U.S. system of education, most students who graduate from high school must complete:

      - at least 3 years of English
      - 2 years of social studies
      - 1 year of mathematics
      - 1+ years of science (non-sequential)
      - 2 years of physical education or health education
      - local or state requirements
      - 5 or more electives

   i. University matriculation examinations; function and purpose.

4. Higher Education

   Access

5. University Education:

   a. History

   b. Institution types

   c. Recognition: accreditation of institutions

   d. Quality issues; faculty qualifications

   e. Admission requirements

   f. Programs and degrees offered

      - Length
      - Structure (breadth vs.specialization)
      - Degrees awarded
      - Degree award requirements

   g. Coursework

   h. Cumulative grade point average (GPA)

   i. Comprehensive examinations

   j. Thesis

   k. What does the degree give access to in the home country?

6. Professionally Regulated Education:

   a. Program accreditation

   b. Relationship between institution and professional associations

   c. Role of professional associations

   d. Licensing and practice requirements (e.g., engineering, business, medicine, allied health [nursing, medical laboratory technology])

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7. Postgraduate Education:

    a. History and purpose

    b. Admission requirements

    c. Program validation, recognition

    d. Programs and degrees offered

        - Length

        - Structure

        - Degree award requirements

Information and Data Analysis

A. Objective: Facilitate international student exchanges.

B. Theory Building: In the theory building process clear definitions of the following concepts must be developed:

    1. Recognition

    2. Equivalency

C. Analysis and synthesis of the information gathered: This can be achieved by using one of the existing comparative education paradigms:

    1. Quantitative (input-output model)

    2. Functionalism

    3. Structural

    4. World systems theory

    5. Eclectic model

Margarita Sianou
February, 1995

Appendix C
Participant Reports and Observations

C.1: Report on the Miami Seminar from the SECUSSA perspective

Jon O. Heise, East Carolina University

I was selected as one of the participants in a June 3-5, 1994 workshop entitled "Methods and Skills for Research on Foreign Educational Systems." The workshop was co-sponsored by NAFSA and EAIE. Among others, attendees included observers from the following organizations: EAIE, ACE, ADSEC, CEC, PIER, and SECUSSA. I appeared to be the only attendee not regularly involved in either admission or transfer of credit questions.

As someone from outside the admissions field, I began the workshop without a clear idea of either its purpose or its potential for SECUSSA activities and U.S. students abroad. As the workshop progressed, it became apparent to me that we were building a new model of investigation of various national systems of education, and specific institutions and functions within those systems. This activity of national educational system description in its old (and still existing) forms comprise the development of PIER reports.

For me, two types of learning resulted from my participation. First, it became apparent that in examining and describing a foreign educational system, there is always a tension between available time, available resources, ease of access to information the visitor would like (or need) to have, and desired completeness of the report. It appears to me that the actual application of resources, time, personnel, etc. will be different for each country, depending upon local circumstances, pre-existing knowledge, and other factors.

The second type of learning resulting from my participation was for me much more important. The workshop provided for the first time a window into a new world of information that had been previously opaque to me as a SECUSSA person. My erroneous assumption had been that the information needed for the admission of foreign students and the advising of U.S. students going abroad were marginally related and perhaps the functions were administratively connected in given institutions, but that they were not directly interrelated.

Participation in this workshop led me to suddenly realize that both admissions and study abroad depend upon the knowledge of the educational systems of other countries, and of the institutions that are units of those systems. It was an exciting revelation to discover that if a team of my professional colleagues was going to be funded to visit a foreign site for the purpose of examining the educational system, SECUSSA could work with that team prior to their departure, to ensure that among the questions they ask and information they seek are those items which are of great importance to us as advisors of U.S. students anticipating international experiences. We could have an on-location team asking questions about comparative quality of schools within a national system, checking out housing, availability of health care to students, languages of instruction actually available, possibilities of internships and work permits for visiting American students, and other matters.

Since the PIER reports and other similar reports are easily available, these reports, with their new content which could be directly relevant to study abroad advisors as well as admissions people, would be a fantastic resource not previously used by those in overseas education. For both the experienced and new professionals in SECUSSA, information on non-European countries as well as European countries would be available not only from the publicity offices of the schools or ministries of education, but also from our own U.S. colleagues who have asked questions from our own point of view, and who have been on site looking at the educational systems and the institutions themselves.

Perhaps each of us gets caught up in one's own whirlwind of activities, deadlines, and pressing duties. This seems to have blinded me to this extremely exciting potential resource. I knew I needed the information, but I never thought of obtaining it in such a mode, simply by collaborating with my own colleagues whom I have known for years!

My eyes have been opened to a whole new method of information acquisition which is crucial in the work each of us does. I believe that the active participation of study abroad people and SECUSSA in the planning, development, and carrying out of PIER projects will yield enormously exciting results, which will benefit not only our offices and functions, but also the educational experiences of our students.

As a result of my participation in this workshop, I would like to make two recommendations:

1. SECUSSA and other international educational organizations and individuals should vigorously seek participation in the planning, design, and carrying out of all PIER projects or similar projects in the future, for the purpose of including information relevant to the area of study abroad.

2. Those responsible for the development of PIER or similar projects should include advisors of U.S. study or work abroad students in their projects from the outset, for planning, development, and execution of the projects. This would broaden the usefulness of the finished product, and thereby achieve an expanded applicability with no additional expenditure.

Jon O. Heise
SECUSSA
July, 1994

C.2: Report on the Miami Seminar from the PIER perspective
William Smart, Oregon State University

The tone throughout the Miami Seminar was strongly positive and encouraging in terms of international cooperation on research. The model being developed will be of benefit to us all. PIER appreciates the leadership in conceptualizing the seminar, getting the necessary funding and approvals, identifying great people to work with in setting it up, and following through on it.

At its September 1994 meeting, PIER will have the opportunity to discuss the seminar and its implications for our work. We are fortunate to have had four members participating actively in the seminar. I feel confident in speaking for the committee to say that research is at the heart of our work and that the seminar helped crystallize some of the important directions for PIER already underway or planned for the future.

Establishing a research model fits tightly into the current work that PIER is doing to revise the guide for collaborators. The process being defined includes a strong emphasis on the research strategy, as well as the essential documentation and various steps in researching an educational system and writing a report. In my estimation, the seminar helped PIER immensely. The group of experts from different countries assembled to discuss methodology brought new and different perspectives to what PIER (and its precursors) has been doing for years. Not only will the *Guide for PIER Authors* benefit from the outcomes of the seminar, but our guidance to authors and our delineation of a process should be sharpened. Furthermore, the timing of the seminar could not have been better. It was fortuitously at a time when the PIER Committee is making substantial changes in its approaches to research and publications.

The seminar also helped continue the spirit of cooperation, collaboration, and communication that has characterized recent PIER undertakings. We have benefited from our closer ties with European professionals; the exchange of information and perspectives has enabled both groups to think collaboratively and to plan substantive ways to foster greater cooperation.

The seminar was a milestone in PIER's (and other groups') agenda for research and publications. I am sure that the committee will welcome future opportunities to work with various constituencies towards common goals of professional enrichment.

William H. Smart, Chair, Projects for International Education Research (PIER)
June 25, 1994

C.3: Report on the Miami Seminar from the ADSEC perspective

Kathleen Sellew, University of Minnesota

ADSEC, as the major sectional sponsor and organizer of the Field Service workshop at the University of Miami, has an interest in training members of the profession to evaluate foreign educational credentials and assess them in a comparative context. The Miami seminar made some good strides toward meeting training objectives by providing a framework for individual research as well as preparing individuals to take on larger research projects.

As part of developing a research plan, participants were exposed to different methods and resources that can be applied to specific educational questions. This methodology emphasized addressing individual characteristics of a system as well as taking into account the larger socio-political context of the structures of educational systems in Latin America. The research tools that were presented to participants are widely applicable in other contexts. The Miami seminar provides a common starting point for development of publications by both U.S. and European researchers. Establishing mutual expectations and a model structure allows an individual publication to be useful to a much wider audience.

As a by-product of the seminar content, ADSEC participants will benefit from having worked directly with European colleagues on a common goal. This can only increase our ability to exchange information and promote academic mobility among our students.

Kathleen Sellew
Chair, ADSEC
October 11, 1994

C.4: Report on the Miami Seminar from the ACE perspective

Marianne Hildebrand
Swedish NARIC

One of the outcomes of the Joint EAIE-NAFSA Working Group on Cooperation in Study of Foreign Educational Systems, Credential Evaluation and Credit Transfer was to arrange this joint seminar on Research on Foreign Educational Systems. Those invited were professionals dealing with international admissions, credential evaluation, study abroad advising and other professionals interested in research and systematic gathering of information on foreign systems, institutions and programs of higher education. There were around 20 participants, equally representing the USA and Europe, presenters mainly from the USA and a few observers.

The aim was for the participants to learn about appropriate research methods, identify useful resources and consider key elements of international educational systems. Educational systems of Latin America were chosen as a context for the seminar topics. The seminar consisted of country presentations and presentations by experts in the design and implementation of research projects and the result will be a research document which will serve as a guideline for future projects. The participants were asked to prepare in advance by reviewing a series of readings and complete a research assignment.

The NAFSA Field Service sponsored the costs for the seminar, which was a great help. The organizers and the presenters had done a lot of work in the preparation of the seminar, which contributed greatly to its success. At the end of the seminar, it turned out that some of the ideas presented would be especially useful in countries like Lithuania and Slovakia as well as in Spain.

There will be a follow-up to the Miami seminar just before the EAIE conference in London November 1994. This seminar will take place in Cambridge November 22-23 and the country focus this time will probably be South Africa and another African country. The results and the report from the Miami seminar will be used as a basis for the discussions in Cambridge and form the basis for a possible joint research project, where pooling of resources and agreement on research methodology will enhance professional knowledge on higher education worldwide.

Marianne Hildebrand
Chair, ACE
October 25, 1994

C.5: Observations on the Miami Seminar: Maria Grabinska

1. Owing to high costs connected with it, the specialists for foreign education systems from countries of Central and Eastern Europe will not have the possibility to participate in the projects of the American PIER reviews although they would be surely interested in them. One of the solutions could be to find a sponsor. In that case the sponsor would cover a part of the costs, and it would be easier to find a solution for paying the remaining part of costs by our officials. I stress once more that we should welcome this kind of cooperation very much.

2. The knowledge and experience acquired at the Miami workshop are useful for us and applicable also from other aspects than the direct participation in international projects. A majority of us participate in, or personally prepare publications on our school system in English for foreign countries. The work in workshops gave us possibility to see our education systems through the eyes of foreign evaluators. The accumulated knowledge will be used in improvement of our future publications on education, first of all, from the point of view of structure of content.

3. Most of us working in the field of international cooperation and mobility in education sector, have some experience in realization of various international projects concerning higher education. For example, Slovak higher education, as a part of the former Czechoslovak higher education, was reviewed by the OECD examiners in 1991-1992 and approximately in the same period Mr. Josef Silny et al. elaborated the PIER publication on Czecho-Slovak education. My personal experience in both of the projects persuades me that such cooperation of foreign experts and home specialists is also unusually useful. But it's true they must be real specialists, and, not the so-called experts. Unfortunately, we have also had experience with such experts who cast doubts upon the results of excellent international projects. I think we will make use of the knowledge acquired during the Miami seminar within the framework of preparation of above projects.

4. The general skills and techniques that we gained through preliminary study on education in the selected Latin American countries may be also used for other projects, a part of which–usually in introduction–is a description of "state of the art" in the domain that is not related to the entire system of education but only to its part. For example, I myself used the study and techniques today when preparing the analysis on the state of the art in adult education in Slovakia, which is a part of the European Union's PHARE project on adult education that I am presently engaged in and that will be finished by elaborating strategic recommendations for adult education development in Slovakia in the near future.

October, 1994

C.6: Observations on the Miami Seminar: Jessica Stannard

Probably the most beneficial result of my participation in the Miami seminar on Methods and Skills for Research on Foreign Educational Systems was that it provided an opportunity to put existing knowledge to use in ways that don't often occur in the daily routine of a credential evaluator. Obviously, the seminar provided a wealth of new information relevant to the topic at hand, and proved to be a valuable learning experience. When the time comes to rewrite a publication on the Dutch educational system, I will most assuredly refer to the outline, and information on research strategies and methodology. However, since a major purpose of the seminar was to comment on, discuss, evaluate, and test the applicability of the information offered, the experience and knowledge that I've accumulated over the years as a credential evaluator were directly applicable, and doing so offered a beneficial and stimulating challenge.

In addition to offering professional benefits, the seminar was a new and unique occurrence in international credential evaluation, and I found it exciting to be part of what could and probably will turn out to be a major step in international

cooperation in this field. The atmosphere of the seminar was relaxed and constructive, the discussions were open, and I had the impression that the majority of participants really wanted it to work.

October 13, 1994

C.7: Observations on the Miami Seminar: Marinela Garcia

I can inform that, as I had promised, I have passed the information about our seminar to every school of the University and to other [educational associations'] members, to which I belong as a representative of the Universidad Politecnica de Madrid.

October 18, 1994

C.8: Observations on the Miami Seminar: Neus Arques

What were my expectations of the seminar? What was the reality? What conclusions did I actually gain?

Expectations. At the time the seminar "Methods and Skills for Research on Foreign Educational Systems" was announced, I was working at a university. One of my tasks was to assess the opportunity of new institutional agreements with foreign institutions. So, it would be good to know some more "about research strategy, methods and processes and not about specific educational systems"...as the publicity announced. I was expected to be familiar with higher education in Brazil, Chile, and Mexico, which I thought I was, at least institution-wise. And, because I am Spanish, one would suspect some kind of imbedded knowledge of past heroic times!

Reality. The reading list took me back to my days in higher education! Yet, it was useful because it allowed me to discover the almost unlimited possibilities of our inter-library loan system (although some of the readings were delivered one month after my stay in Miami!). It turned out that most of the seminar attendants were credential evaluators, practitioners in a field of which I knew practically nothing. In fact, the only thing I knew was that credential evaluation in Spain is a tricky thing--with regard to admission to universities at the postgraduate level, it is the responsibility of professors. With regard to admission at the undergraduate level or degree recognition, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. That is, there is basically nothing for someone like me in this field.

Yet, in this respect, the seminar opened a new window onto a previously unseen world, one dominated by PIER reports and a jargon I found fascinating. It also made me realize the long way ahead for Spanish universities before standard recognition practices are reached.

I witnessed continuous efforts to reach a common understanding, negotiate the meaning of words [between Europeans and USA representatives when describing systems of education]. These efforts facilitated formal interactions and informal conversations.

Conclusions. Professionally, I gained a new view with respect to:

1. The importance of group work when dealing with countries about which I have fragmented knowledge;

2. My own country's evaluation procedures;

3. The typical prejudice that Europe is not America. U.S. credential evaluators did not always understand one another, but they agreed on methodology and the resources to be used, including PIER reports.

The seminar had a happy ending for me. In September, I was contacted to establish a new Spanish-Latin American university cooperative program--student and faculty exchanges, as well as institutional networks. So, the information I gained on how to assess applications and institutional credibility is now most welcome.

November 1994

C.9: Observations on the Cambridge Seminar: Reuven Kaminer

The Miami-Cambridge seminars constitute a major step forward in research by credential evaluators. In addition to the benefits linked to the creation of a model for an adequate description of any country's educational system and research techniques to pursue that objective, the seminars marked a new level of cooperation between European and American credential evaluators.

December, 1994

C.10: Observations on the Cambridge Seminar: Diane Roney

The information available on educational systems is a key resource for specialists who evaluate foreign credentials. Over the past three decades, the process by which this information is collected, analyzed, and disseminated has grown in sophistication. In the United States, it has also shifted from being a process primarily dictated by the needs of government, to one directed by professionals in the field. At the Cambridge Seminar, I witnessed an ongoing step of maturity in the form of a rich international dialogue.

It is significant that EAIE and NAFSA members can come together and identify common elements of information needed in the evaluation process. The model outline moves us in the direction of credential evaluation decision-making based on similar genres of information for each country. The model presents an organizational framework for the study of educational systems. The model research strategy not only is a guide to panning research, but also sets a standard expected in undertaking research.

Behind the outline, I see two questions. The first is not new. It is based on the demand for student mobility across national boarders. "What information is needed to make a judgment as to whether a student is prepared to pursue a given program of study at a particular institution, or within a given educational system different from the one in which the student previously studied?" This question is a very practical one for international educational exchange. It is also a question with economic, social, and political implications.

A decision to accept a person from country X with credential Y into educational program Z implies a comparability between the education represented by credential Y and whatever credential normally gives access to program Z. Implicit in such a decision is a statement of "value" of one country's education versus anothers' as represented by a given educational credential. The access or non-access to education resulting from credential evaluation thus can reinforce existing economic, social, and political stratification, or facilitate change.

The second question I see is more broad based and future oriented. "Can the evaluation of educational credentials and the related study of educational systems become an academic discipline?" Within the profession, I sense a desire to bring our research on educational systems to the standard of academic research. This is an admirable and worthy endeavor that is facilitated by the collegial exchanges of the Miami and Cambridge seminars. Adopting more rigorous standards of research is different from being an academic field.

The evaluation of educational credentials is related to the existing academic fields of Comparative Education and Higher Education. To evolve into an academic field in our own right requires the development and testing of theories with explanatory power. Can theories be developed to predict the outcome(s) when a credential is evaluated in a certain way within a given educational system?

The interchange at the Cambridge Seminar both enlightened me as to the current directions for country research and stimulated my thinking in terms of the field as a whole. I believe that the interest in developing what we do in credential evaluation as a field of academic study stems from the value inherent in anything that is an academic discipline. Because credential evaluation is so tied to the culture of educational systems, it makes sense that we seek the stature accorded academic disciplines. Whether it is possible waits to be answered by the pioneer(s) of the first theory.

January, 1995

Appendix D: List of Seminar Participants

Key: b = both Miami and Cambridge
c = Cambridge
m = Miami

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